

APPENDIX B: PRESS RELEASES

Sample Press Release

Media Contact: (Name/Phone Number)

For Immediate Release

How to Talk to Children about _____

LOCATION—Experts encourage parents and teachers to talk to children about their feelings about _____. To help parents and teachers, the NAME OF ORGANIZATION offers the tips below.

- ☐ Provide children with opportunities to talk about what they are seeing on television and to ask questions.
- ☐ Do not be afraid to admit that you can't answer all their questions.
- ☐ Answer questions at a level the child can understand.
- ☐ Provide ongoing opportunities for children to talk. They will probably have more questions as time goes on.
- ☐ Use this as an opportunity to establish a family emergency plan. Feeling that there is something you can do may be very comforting to both children and adults.
- ☐ Allow children to discuss other fears and concerns about unrelated issues. This is a good opportunity to explore these issues also.
- ☐ Monitor children's television watching. Some parents may wish to limit their child's exposure to graphic or troubling scenes. To the extent possible, watch reports of the disaster with children. It is at these times that questions might arise.

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How to Talk to Children about _____, page 2

- ☐ Help children understand that there are no bad emotions and that a wide range of reactions is normal. Encourage children to express their feelings to adults (including teachers and parents) who can help them understand their sometimes strong and troubling emotions.
- ☐ Try not to focus on blame.
- ☐ In addition to the tragic things they see, help children identify good things, such as heroic actions, families who are grateful for being reunited, and the assistance offered by people throughout the country and the world.

Teachers also can help children through art and play activities, as well as by encouraging group discussions in the classroom and informational presentations about the disaster.

If you or someone you love needs help with their reactions to _____, call the
NAME OF ORGANIZATION at NUMBER or visit WEB ADDRESS.

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Sample Press Release

Media Contact: (Name/Phone Number)

For Immediate Release

Recognizing and Dealing with Reactions to _____

LOCATION—The recent _____ in our area have caused many of us to have reactions that include anxiety, fear, anger, and hypervigilance. While these reactions are to be expected, the NAME OF ORGANIZATION offers the following information about typical reactions and ways to cope.

What Are Typical Reactions to a Traumatic Event or Disaster?

- ☐ Fears and anxieties
- ☐ Reluctance to leave home
- ☐ Hypervigilance, excessive watchfulness, being on-guard for possible threats
- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Fatigue or exhaustion
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Changes in appetite
- ☐ Changes in sleeping patterns; problems going to sleep, nightmares
- ☐ Sensitivity to loud noises
- ☐ Alcohol and other drug use
- ☐ Sadness, crying
- ☐ Inability to concentrate

What You Can Do To Help

When helping family, friends and co-workers, individuals often benefit from talking about the experience. Some tips "Do's and Do not's" for listening are:

Do say:

- These are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.
- It is understandable that you feel this way.
- You are not going crazy.

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Recognizing and Dealing with Reactions to _____, page 2

- It wasn't your fault, you did the best you could.
- Things may never be the same, but they will get better, and you will feel better.

Do not say:

- It could have been worse.
- It's best if you just stay busy.
- I know just how you feel.
- You need to get on with your life.

For children, reassurance is the key. Very young children need a lot of cuddling, as well as verbal support. Answer questions about the situation honestly but do not dwell on frightening details or allow the subject to dominate family or classroom time indefinitely. Encourage children of all ages to express emotions through conversation, drawing, or painting but allow silences. Listen attentively to what children are saying and provide reassurance without minimizing their fears.

Additionally, try to maintain a normal household and encourage children to participate in recreational activity and limit viewing of news coverage and when you view news coverage do it together so you can answer questions and provide support. Adults should try to resume regular social and recreational activities when appropriate.

Finally, acknowledge that you may have reactions associated with the traumatic event, and take steps to promote your own physical and emotional healing.

If you or someone you love needs help with their reactions to _____, call the NAME OF ORGANIZATION at NUMBER or visit WEB ADDRESS.

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Sample Press Release

Media Contact: (Name/Phone Number)

For Immediate Release

New Web site Provides Information About Reactions to 9/11 and Services Available in Northern Virginia

Northern Virginia—The Community Resilience Project of Northern Virginia announced today that their Web site, <http://www.communityresilience.org>, is now available to provide information about the emotional and physical reactions to the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the free help that is available to people who live or work in northern Virginia.

Hosted by the Community Resilience Project, the Web site has special sections targeting children, teenagers, adults, seniors, teachers, mental health practitioners, and more. Information about the specific services that are available in the four areas that make up the Community Resilience Project, which are Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, and Loudoun, is also available.

“The new Community Resilience Project Web site will be a valuable tool in helping people understand what they, their spouses, their children, and others are going through, especially as we approach the anniversary of the attacks,” said WHO, TITLE of ORGANIZATION. “It is important not only to recognize these reactions, but also to know how to handle them effectively. The Web site gives people access to a wealth of important information that can help them and their loved ones through this difficult time.”

Insert quote from an official spokesperson providing reassurance.

“ _____

_____ ”

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Community Resilience Project Web site Announced, page 2

List contact information, ways to get more information, and other resources.

The Community Resilience Project of Northern Virginia, funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is a cooperative venture among the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun, and the city of Alexandria. The free services available through the Community Resilience Project include individual and group counseling, support groups, stress management, emergency preparedness, dealing with grief and loss, children and trauma, county services referrals, and financial or economic guidance. Services are also available to the hearing impaired. To find out more, call 1-866-400-2951 (TTY: 703-228-4831) or visit <http://www.communityresilience.com>.

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Template for Press Statement⁴⁶

If the media are “at your door” and you need time to assemble the facts for this initial press release statement, use “Template for Prescribed, Immediate Response to Media Inquires”. Getting the facts is a priority. It is important that your organization not give in to pressure to confirm or release information before you have confirmation from your scientists, emergency operations center, etc.

The purpose of this initial press statement is to answer the basic questions: who, what, where, when. This statement should also provide whatever guidance is possible at this point, express the association and administration’s concern, and detail how further information will be disseminated. If possible, the statement should give phone numbers or contacts for more information or assistance. Please remember that this template is meant only to provide you with guidance. One template will not work for every situation.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (name of contact)

PHONE: (number of contact)

Date of release: (date)

Headline—Insert your primary message to the public

Dateline (your location)—Two-three sentences describing current situation

Insert quote from an official spokesperson demonstrating leadership and concern for victims.

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Insert actions being taken.

⁴⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2003). Emergency risk communication (ERC) CDCynergy. Office of Communications, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

List actions that will be taken.

List information on possible reactions of public and ways citizens can help.
